UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1994/5
29 November 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Special session
15-18 February 1994, New York
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

HIV, AIDS AND DEVELOPMENT

HIV and Development National Professional Officers

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted to the Governing Council in response to paragraph 23 of its decision 93/95. It outlines the background and the process of the consultations undertaken with the World Health Organization/ Global Programme on AIDS and its Management Committee Task Force on HIV/AIDS coordination to secure agreement on the functions to be performed by the HIV and Development National Professional Officers.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. In pursuance of Governing Council decision 92/14 of 26 May 1992, the Administrator, through the Central Evaluation Office (CEO), undertook an external and independent assessment of the country level programme activities to address the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) epidemic. The CEO report, made available to the Governing Council at its fortieth session (1993), concluded that the epidemic is "a major global development problem with potentially devastating consequences for developing countries".

2. The CEO report, and the report of the evaluation mission on Development Implications of HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (RAS/90/021), show that UNDP field offices are already playing an important role in mobilizing and supporting many of the key actors in the response to the epidemic: community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, political and religious leaders and a wide range of government ministries, within the framework of the national AIDS programme.

3. However, the report also noted that "the United Nations system of agencies and its principal representatives in the developing countries are not now in a position to provide the leadership and support that the developing countries require to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic." In particular, it concluded that UNDP does not now have in the field the staff capacities to plan and administer an expanded programme for HIV and AIDS.

4. UNDP is exercising multiple functions with respect to the HIV epidemic. These functions include awareness creation and advocacy of the epidemic as a development issues, support for the development of effective and sustainable programme approaches, the provision of technical and financial assistance to national and intercountry responses and the strengthening of national capacity for the coordination of external support and for resource mobilization.

5. These are outlined in the "Policy Framework for the Response of UNDP to HIV and AIDS (DP/91/57)" and expanded upon in the UNDP paper on the coordination of HIV-related activities prepared for the High-level segment on coordination of the Economic and Social Council, July 1992. They are carried out within the policy framework of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of AIDS and with the technical support in health matters of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS (GPA).

6. The WHO/UNDP Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the WHO/UNDP Alliance to Combat HIV and AIDS signed in July 1993, marks an important transition for UNDP, from playing a responsive role in HIV programme financing to an active involvement from multidimensional programme inception through its development, implementation and evaluation.

7. Such a programmatic approach will, by its nature, involve those most affected by the epidemic. It will be capable of taking into account the complexity of behaviour change and of support to those affected, locating the process of change within the community itself whilst strengthening the institutional and sectoral infrastructure required for programme and policy

development. The Memorandum of Understanding gives WHO and UNDP joint responsibility for the development of such a programmatic approach, nationally and internationally.

8. Since the signing of the WHO/UNDP Memorandum of Understanding, a number of important initiatives have been set in place to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to coordinate its response to the epidemic. These include the establishment of the Task Force of HIV/AIDS Coordination on the Management Committee of GPA and the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution WHA 46.37 requesting that the Director General of WHO study the feasibility and practicability of establishing a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, in close consultation with the Executive Heads of UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank. This study will be presented to the Executive Board of WHO in January 1994 and it is anticipated that a new United Nations programme may be in place by mid-1995.

9. One of the specific proposals arising from the CEO report was to create local staff support for the Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator in the area of HIV and AIDS. It was agreed that such support was essential to assist UNDP offices to carry out their multiple functions, in particular the development of a programmatic response to their work in this area, and to assist Resident Coordinators, where Resident Representatives exercise this responsibility, to ensure that the United Nations system provides the leadership and support required by developing countries to respond effectively to the epidemic.

10. To address this need and in response to General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992, the Administrator proposed in the budget estimates for the biennium 1994-1995 (DP/1993/45) to establish a limited network of 22 National Officer posts for the HIV and Development Programme.

11. The HIV and Development National Professional Officers (NPOs) will report to the Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator and will be given substantive and policy guidance by the HIV and Development Programme. They will assist the field office in strengthening national capacity and its own capacity to take the causes and consequences of the epidemic into account in all UNDP country programming. They may also assist the Resident Coordinators in ensuring collaboration and coordination amongst all United Nations organs, institutions and specialized agencies and, in particular, in the preparation of a unified HIV country strategy and the monitoring of its implementation.

II. THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

12. In its decision 93/35 of 18 June 1993, the Governing Council approved in principle the request to establish a limited network of up to 22 National Officer posts to support the role of the Resident Coordinator/Resident Representative in the national response to the HIV epidemic, subject to:

(a) A joint review by UNDP and WHO/GPA staff, in consultation with the WHO/GPA Management Committee Task Force on HIV and AIDS Coordination, with the view to securing early agreement on the functions to be performed by the officers;

(b) A review by the Council at its special session in February 1994, of the relevance of the posts, taking into account the report of the study called for by resolution WHA 46.37 of 14 May 1993 and supported in Governing Council decision 93/14, as well as the outcome of the joint review mentioned in subparagraph (a) above.

13. Subsequent to Governing Council decision 93/35, consultations were undertaken with WHO/GPA on the basis of the terms of reference for the National Officer posts set out in document DP/1993/45. Revised terms of reference were sent to WHO/GPA. The terms of reference further revised on the basis of this correspondence were then sent to the WHO/GPA Management Committee Task Force on HIV and AIDS Coordination, to all the UNDP Regional Bureaux and to other relevant units for comments. These comments were then incorporated into the text, which was once again sent to WHO/GPA, to the Task Force and to relevant units within UNDP. As a result of comments received, further revisions were incorporated in order to produce the present report.

III. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE

14. The following terms of reference have been developed to enable the timely recruitment and deployment of HIV and Development National Professional Officers in the field. With the establishment of a co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV and AIDS, the responsibility to assist and ensure the coordinated and collaborative response of the United Nations system will pass to the country staff member of the new Programme. The NPOs will retain the responsibility of strengthening UNDP ability to address the interdependence of national development and the epidemic.

15. Under the leadership of the Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator and in close collaboration with all United Nations organizations and agencies, in consultation with bilateral donors, NGOs and other support agencies and in close collaboration with national authorities, the National Professional Officers will support efforts to:

(a) Increase understanding of the epidemic as a pervasive development issue within UNDP, within government and among all concerned individuals, groups and institutions;

(b) Strengthen national capacity to develop, implement, monitor and sustain effective and sustainable broad-based programmes that address the epidemic and which mobilize the human and financial resources of communities, NGOs and the private sector as well as those of Governments;

(c) Strengthen the capacity of the UNDP field offices to contribute to the process of achieving a broad-based national response to the epidemic and to assist in the development of appropriate approaches to evaluation;

(d) Contribute to the in-country capacity of the United Nations system to integrate the causes and consequences of the epidemic into all aspects of national development;

(e) Assist and facilitate national capacity to coordinate, monitor and evaluate efforts to address the multidimensional nature of the epidemic and facilitate the exchange of related effective policies, programmes and lessons learned;

(f) Enhance national capacity to coordinate HIV-related technical and financial assistance of external donors through a unified strategy in support of the national response and ensure the collaboration of the United Nations system in this strategy;

(g) Facilitate a unified, coordinated and collaborative United Nations response to the epidemic at the country level.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS

16. The HIV and Development National Professional Officers shall:

(a) Be nationals with a good knowledge of, and experience in, the culture and traditions of the country;

(b) Have extensive background and experience (six to nine years) in national development planning or in development cooperation programming, especially in community development;

(c) Have extensive contacts within the local non-governmental community, especially HIV-related community organizations, with experience in community mobilization, advocacy and programming;

(d) Have training skills and experience and proven writing skills in the working language of the field office;

(e) Have six to nine years experience in programme design, programme design research, programme implementation and/or programme monitoring and evaluation;

(f) Be proficient in the working language of the field office and, in those countries where the government functions in one or more local languages, be conversant with those languages;

(g) Have strong and proven interpersonal, facilitation and consensus-building skills;

(h) Preferably have a higher degree in the social sciences, humanities, law or economics.

17. The HIV and Development National Professional Officers will report on a day-to-day basis to the Resident Representative but will be given programmatic

and policy guidance and training by the HIV and Development Programme. All officers will, after their appointment, attend a week-long residential training workshop on the developmental causes and consequences of the HIV epidemic.

V. LOCATION OF HIV AND DEVELOPMENT NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS

18. In his budget estimates for the biennium 1994-1995, the Administrator proposed a set of criteria for the selection of countries for the placement of HIV and Development NPOs, including: (a) the desire expressed by a country to develop and strengthen a broad-based and sustainable national response and (b) the extent to which Resident Coordinators/Resident Representatives play an active role in the country in the mobilization and coordination of external support.

19. Countries have been identified in accordance with these criteria by the Regional Bureaux within the framework of the UNDP overall budget strategy and in consultation with the Bureau for Finance and Administration and the HIV and Development Programme for the placement of HIV and Development National Professional Officers.

VI. CONCLUSION

20. In submitting the present report to the Governing Council, the Administrator wishes to keep the Council informed of the vital need for UNDP to continue to address the interdependence of the HIV epidemic and human development. On the basis of the agreement reached through the extensive consultative process called for in Council decision 93/35 and undertaken within UNDP, the Administrator wishes to inform the Council that, without incurring any additional financial implications, UNDP has initiated the recruitment process for the National Professional Officers. They will play a crucial role in assisting Governments to strengthen national capacity to identify, analyse and plan for the socio-economic causes and consequences of the epidemic and, in the interim before the establishment of the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme in AIDS, in ensuring collaboration and coordination within the United Nations system and among all external support agencies. This arrangement is fully consistent with the objective of the study called for in WHA resolution WHA 46.37, addressing the feasibility and practicability of establishing a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV and AIDS.